

Message Text

SECRET

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45 L

ACTION IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 257

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

S E C R E T CAIRO 9222

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG OCON UNESCO

SUBJECT: UNESCO 18TH GENERAL CONFERENCE: ARAB-
MOSLEM RE RESOLUTION RE JERUSALEM

REF PARIS 27150

1. HAVE READ WITH INTEREST AND APPRECIATION THOUGHTFUL
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED REFTEL. AS REPORTED
CAIRO 8707 AND AS EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR WAKIL APPARENTLY
REAFFIRMED TO USDEL OFFICER, ISSUE IS SUFFICIENTLY SENSITIVE
HERE THAT NY REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS EGYPTIAN PETITION CAN ONLY
BE DECIDED UPON BY PRESIDENT SADAT.

2. IN CONSIDERING POSSIBLE DEMARCHE AT HIGHEST LEVEL HERE,
FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND:

A. SADAT CANNOT ACT ALONE OR BE OUT OF STEP WITH

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OTHER ARABS ON THIS MATTER, ESPECIALLY AFTER RECENT RABAT

SUMMIT;

B. SADAT WILL PROBABLY WANT TO KEEP IN STEP WITH FAISAL, TO WHOM HE IS BEHOLDEN FOR CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL AID AND FROM WHOM HE HOPES FOR MORE AID, RE AN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH SAUDI MONARCH FEELS SO INTENSELY;

C. SADAT, LIKE OTHER ARAB LEADERS, IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER ISRAELI TACTIC OF CREATING FAIT ACCOMPLIS. OCCASIONAL USG STATEMENTS THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT ANY CHANGES MADE UNILATERALLY BY ONE OR THE OTHER PARTY IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE DOES NOT APPRECIABLY ALLAY HIS CONCERN;

D. WHILE SADAT IS ANXIOUS TO DEVELOP GOOD PUBLIC IMAGE IN US AND WITH US CONGRESS, HE MUST WEIGH THIS DESIRE AGAINST POINTS MADE ABOVE. IN VIEW PROTRACTED DELAY IN CONGRESSIONAL ENACTMENT OF PROMISED \$250 MILLION AID FOR EGYPT, THERE IS AT THE MOMENT CONSIDERABLE DISILLUSIONMENT HERE ABOUT EXTENT TO WHICH USG AID WILL ACTUALLY BE FORTHCOMING. THERE IS ALSO GREAT SENSITIVITY TO ANY SUGGESTION OF THREAT. THUS, ANY HINT THAT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON \$250 MILLION AID FOR EGYPT MIGHT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY EGYPTIAN POSITION ON JERUSALEM RESOLUTION WILL MORE LIKELY HAVE NEGATIVE THAN POSITIVE EFFECT HERE.

E. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, WHAT IS AT STAKE IS ALLEGED ISRAELI DESECRATION OF ISLAMIC HOLY PLACES IN JERUSALEM. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT SADAT IS HIMSELF A DEVOUT MOSLEM AND IS TROUBLED BY ISRAELI ACTIONS IN JERUSALEM. MOREOVER, IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL TERMS, IT IS VITAL TO HIM IN THIS CRITICAL PERIOD THAT HE RETAIN THE RESPECT AND SUPPORT OF HIS PREDOMINANTLY CONSERVATIVE AND RELIGIOUSLY-INCLINED EGYPTIAN CONSITTUENCY.

3. IN LIGHT ABOVE, ANY DEMARCHE TO SADAT TO RECONSIDER EGYPTIAN SUPPORT OF JERUSALEM RESOLUTION WILL REQUIRE, IF IT IS TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING, SOME TANGIBLE NEW ELEMENT WHICH WOULD IN HIS MIND JUSTIFY TAKING THE POLITICAL RISK INVOLVED IN CHANGING EGYPTIAN POSITION. ARGUMENT THAT UNESCO SHOULD NOT BE A POLITICAL BODY HAS LONG SINCE LOST ITS PUNCH HERE. IF GOI COULD BE INDUCED TO CHANGE ITS POLICY TOWARD ISLAMIC MONUMENTS AND HALT EXCAVATIONS, EVEN TEMPORARILY, WE WOULD AT LEAST HAVE A PEG ON WHICH TO HANG A DEMARCHE URGING EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR SOFTENED LANGUAGE ON JERUSALEM RESOLUTION. WITHOUT ISRAELI

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CONCESSIONS, CHANCES OF GENERATING EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE AND/OR SUPPORT FOR SOFTER LANGUGE IS FRANKLY DIM. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE TIME TO URGE BOTH SIDES TO MAKE MEANINGFUL COMPROMISE ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE.
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